

**Board of Pilot Commissioners for the Bays
of San Francisco, San Pablo and Suisun**

Pier 9, Suite 102, San Francisco, CA 94111
Phone: (415) 397-2253 Fax: (415) 397-9463
E-mail: pilots@earthlink.net



August 8, 2005

Captain John Cota

94952

Re: Pilot Conduct on USS TARAWA, 10/09/04

Dear Captain Cota:

The Incident Review Committee of the Board of Pilot Commissioners is closing its investigation of your reported conduct in connection with your piloting of the USS TARAWA during Fleet Week 2004 with this Letter of Concern.

Briefly, on October 9, 2004, prior to boarding the TARAWA at the offshore pilot station, you noted that the TARAWA's pilot ladder was equipped with tag lines, used to hoist the ladder by the ship's crew when not in use. You believed the tag lines to create a danger and asked the crew to remove them. When they did not, you used your pocket knife to cut them loose from the ladder and nearly fell off the pilot boat.

Witnesses described you as "enraged" and irrational. You stated in subsequent interviews that you were angered at what you believed was a violation of law that created a personal hazard to you.

In an e-mail and subsequent statements from the TARAWA's captain and bridge team, it was reported that, upon boarding the TARAWA and entering the bridge, you repeatedly used offensive and derogatory language, which pervaded much of the inbound trip. You took issue with some aspects of those statements but also believed your conduct to be understandable, given your interpretation of the tag line incident and what you believed to be shortcomings in the ship's radar and bridge team.

Despite your apparent state of mind and what was reported as a hostile atmosphere on the bridge created by your conduct, the TARAWA was safely docked under challenging environmental conditions.

As a result of your reported conduct, the Port Agent removed you from normal assignment rotation pending determination by the IRC that you were fit for duty. You were examined by your own physician, who determined that you were fit for duty. You were subsequently examined by two Board physicians, who determined that you met the Board's physical and mental standards for pilots.

BOPC
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You resumed your regular piloting duties in March 2005 and have reportedly been performing your duties without further incident. Accordingly, this matter will be closed.

While the IRC has treated this incident as a medical issue, it has informed you that the conduct described by the captain and officers of the TARAWA was, in the IRC's view, unprofessional and had the potential of distracting the bridge team from the safe navigation of the vessel.

A copy of this letter will remain a part of your file with the Board.

Sincerely,



Gunnar Lundeberg
Chairman, Incident Review Committee



Patrick A. Moloney
Member, Incident Review Committee

**Board of Pilot Commissioners
for the Bays of
San Francisco
San Pablo and Suisun**



M/V PIONEER

Pilot: Capt John COTA

20 Feb. 2006

**Board of Pilot Commissioners for the Bays
of San Francisco, San Pablo and Suisun**

Pier 9, Suite 102, San Francisco, CA 94111

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**Subject: INVESTIGATION INTO THE GROUNDING OF M/V PIONEER IN THE
VICINITY OF BUOY DD, NEW YORK SLOUGH AT ABOUT 0810 ON 20 FEBRUARY
2006. PILOT: CAPT J. COTA**

- Encl: (1) Preliminary Incident Report
(2) USCG Documents
 A. Form 2692
 B. AIS printout
 C. AIS course/speed data
(3) Pilot's Report
(4) Vessel documents
 C. Vessel's Bell Book
 I. Vessel's Particulars
 M. Vessel's maneuvering characteristics
(5) Engineer's report - not used
(6) Tide Information
(7) Overview of area
(8) Investigator's Report
(9) Photos/drawing of vessel
(10) Lloyds/Jane's information
(11) Tug information
(12) Pilot Incident Summary
(13) Incident Factors Checklist
(14) Investigation Checklist

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. On the morning of 20 February 2006, the Board of Pilot Commissioners received word of the grounding of the bulk freighter M/V PIONEER in New York Slough. The pilot was Capt J. Cota. The Incident was reported by Acting Port Agent Capt Peter McIsaac to the Executive Director by telephone, Encl: (1) followed. Board Investigator Capt William Figari was assigned that afternoon and began the investigation the next morning.

2. The Incident Review Committee (IRC) consists of Commissioner Gunnar Lundeborg and Executive Director Patrick Moloney. The IRC met with Capt Cota and counsel on the morning of July 7 to discuss the incident and develop recommendations.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. M/V PIONEER is a diesel bulk carrier registered at Port Vila, Vanuatu, with a Ukrainian crew & officers. The vessel is single screw; 4 bladed, right turning, controllable pitch propeller with twin rudders. There is a 1,000 hp bow thruster. The vessel was built in 1981 at Port Weller Dry Docks, Ltd., St Catharines, Canada, as the CANADIAN PIONEER.

Length: 730.0' Beam: 76.0'

Draft: 32' fwd, 32' aft

tonnage: 24,113 grt 10,168 net

Engine: Doxford Diesel, 4 cyl, 9,000 bhp

speed rpm pitch speed (Loaded)

full ahead (sea) 95 9.5 12.5 kts

full ahead 83 7.5 12.0 kts

half ahead 78 6.0 09.0 kts

slow ahead 68 4.0 06.0 kts

dead slow ahead 65 2.5 04.0 kts

Encl: (3, 4 & 10)

2. The vessel is owned by Murbulk Shipping Inc. St Catharines, Ont., Canada.

The vessel was operated by CSL International, Beverly, Mass.

The vessel's agent was General Steamship Corp.

Encl: (1, 4 & 8)

3. The master of the M/V PIONEER was Capt Oleg Rodashchuk.
Encl: (4 & 8)

4. The pilot of the M/V PIONEER was Capt. John Cota, SFBP.
Encl: (1, 3, & 8)

5. Tugs involved:

Name: **Lynn Marie** Operator:

Owner: American Navigation Marine Services

Length: 105' Beam: ' Draft: '

tonnage:

Propulsion configuration: twin screw, 6,250 bhp

Bollard pull: 156,000# ahead, 156,000# astern

Name: **Marauder** Operator:

Owner: American Navigation Marine Services

Length: 97' Beam: 27' Draft: 12'

tonnage:

Propulsion configuration: twin screw, 4,200 bhp

Bollard pull: 56,000# ahead

Encl: (11)

6. The vessel was enroute from Anchorage 9 to the Domtar Terminal, Antioch.

Encl: (3)

7. At 0810 in the vicinity of New York Slough, the environmental conditions were:

Wind: unknown

Visibility: Clear

Tide Height: 3.5 feet, falling

Current: Flooding 0.9 kts

Encl: (3, 6 & 8)

8. Capt Cota boarded the vessel at Anchorage 9 and made an uneventful transit to New York Slough. He noted that the vessel handled poorly as a result of the single screw, twin rudder configuration. During the transit of New York Slough the docking tugs were made up with *Marauder* on the port bow and the *Lynn Marie* on the stern. The vessel was being followed by the M/V CHANNEL RANGER bound for Stockton.

Encl: (3, 8)

9. As the vessel approached light 10 in the East Reach, Capt Cota ordered a turn to port for the 26° bend in the channel. The vessel was on dead slow ahead. AIS recordings indicate it was making about 6 knots over ground. The tugs were not used, nor was the bow thruster. The vessel did not turn appreciably in the following current and at about 0805 grounded gently by the starboard bow in the vicinity of Buoy DD.

Encl: (2, 3, 8)

10. After the vessel grounded, Capt Cota advised VTS and contacted Capt Sweeney, piloting the CHANNEL RANGER. They agreed that the CHANNEL RANGER would pass before attempting to back the PIONEER away from the bank. Capt Cota used the tugs to hold the PIONEER at the side of the channel until the CHANNEL RANGER had passed and was clear. There was no vessel interaction involved in the passing.

Encl: (3)

11. Once the CHANNEL RANGER had passed, Capt Cota used the PIONEER's engine and the tugs to pull it back into the channel. It was off the bank at about 0910 and proceeded to dock uneventfully at Domtar Terminal. VTS was notified when the vessel was refloated.

Encl: (3, 8)

PROBABLE CAUSE

On the morning of 20 February 2006, Capt Cota boarded the bulk freighter PIONEER in Anchorage 9 to pilot it to Domtar Terminal near Antioch. The vessel has peculiar maneuvering characteristics due to being single screw with twin rudders. Capt Cota noted it handled poorly. The transit to New York Slough was uneventful.

When the vessel entered New York Slough the docking tugs met it and were made up with *Marauder* on the port bow and the *Lynn Marie* on the stern. The transit of the channel was made at dead slow speed, with about a one knot following current. Another vessel, bound for Stockton, was following the PIONEER.

As the vessel approached Light 10 in the East Reach, Capt Cota ordered a turn to port for the 26° bend in the channel. The vessel was making about 6 knots over ground at the time. The vessel did not turn as quickly as Capt Cota anticipated and at 0805 the starboard bow gently grounded on the south side of the channel, with the bridge near Buoy DD.

Capt Cota had not realized the vessel was going off track and did nothing to prevent it. Even at dead slow ahead the vessel was making too much way for the bow thruster to be effective. The tug on the bow could have been used to assist the turn but Capt Cota was not aware of the developing situation.

Once the vessel grounded, Capt Cota contacted VTS to report it, and informed the pilot on the vessel following the PIONEER of the grounding, and to make passing arrangements. He used the tugs to hold the PIONEER alongside the bank while the other passed. When the other vessel was clear, Capt Cota used the PIONEER's engine and the two tugs to pull it away from the bank. The channel bottom in the area is sand and mud. There was no damage to the vessel or the environment. The vessel was refloated at 0910 and proceeded to Domtar Terminal where it was docked uneventfully. Capt Cota reported to VTS when the vessel was refloated.

OPINIONS

1. The rudder configuration of the PIONEER makes it difficult to handle. Steering is sluggish at low speeds.
2. Ample resources were available to safely maneuver the PIONEER through New York Slough.
3. Capt Cota did not realize the vessel was turning too slowly and therefore failed to take corrective action.

4. Once the vessel grounded Capt Cota promptly made the proper reports and passing arrangements to allow the safe passage of the vessel following his. Post-grounding actions allowed the safe refloating of the vessel despite a falling tide.

5. No other mitigating factors were involved in the grounding. The cause was lack of situational awareness on Capt Cota's part.

RECOMMENDATIONS

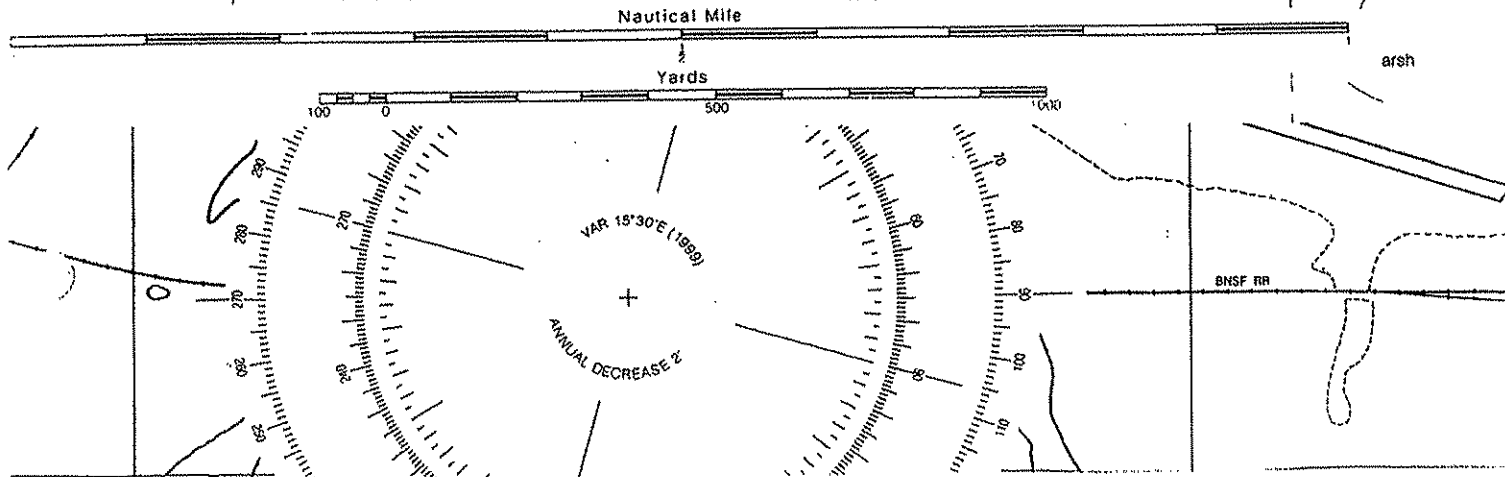
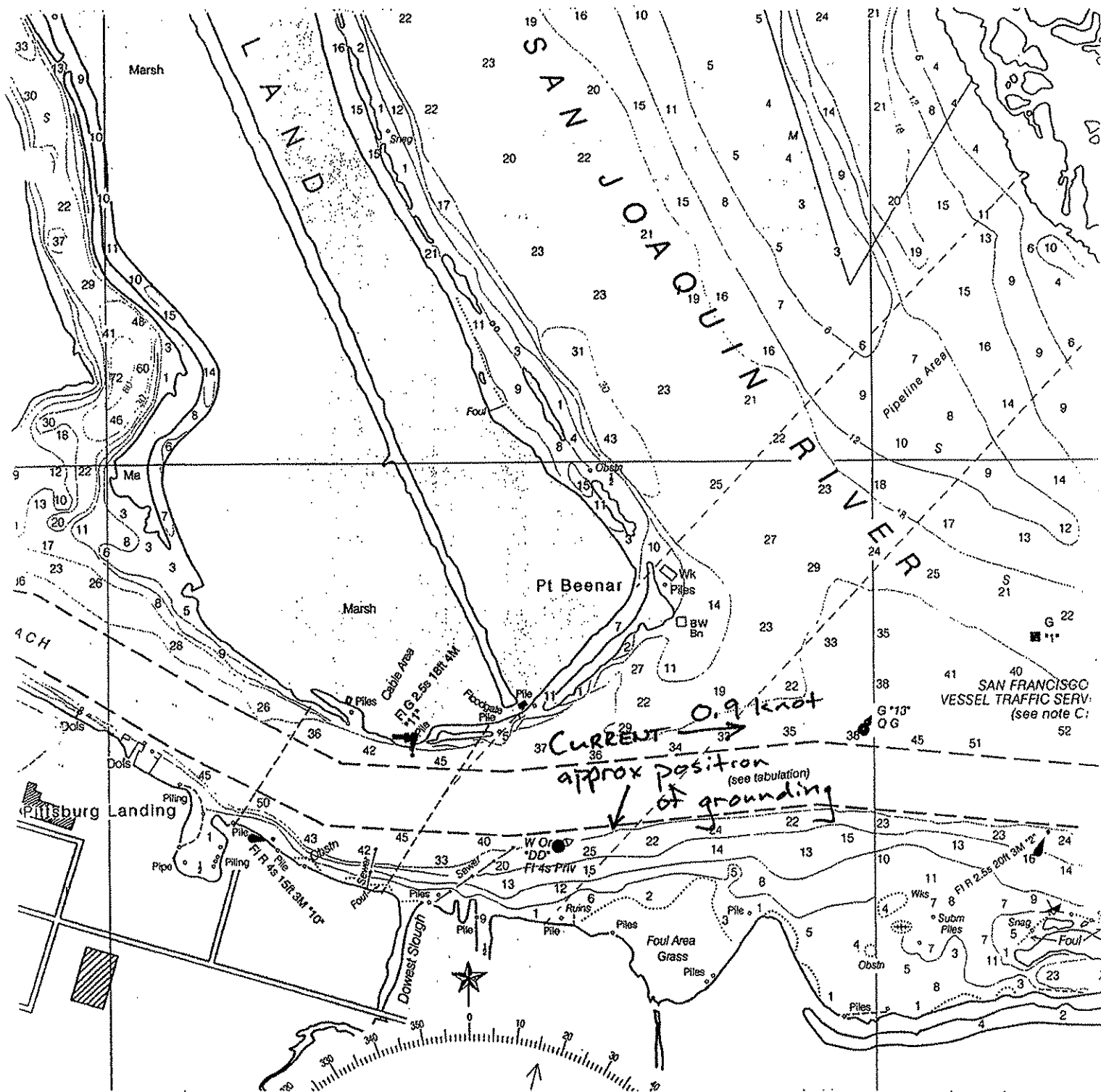
1. Close this incident. Pilot in error. Capt Cota acknowledges the lack of situational awareness and does not expect it will happen again. A Warning Letter of Reprimand has been placed in his file.


Capt. P. A. Moloney


Commissioner Gunnar Lundeborg

Incident Review Committee

cc: Commissioners (7), Investigators (4), Incident folder, Pilot folder, Pilots (60), Trainees (6), Port Agent Office, USCG, OSPR, Training curriculum, Adam, Betz, Bonebakker, Graham, Johnson, Nowell, Rath, Slough



**Board of Pilot Commissioners
for the Bays of
San Francisco
San Pablo and Suisun**



M/V GINGA KITE

Pilot: Capt. J. Cota

6 October 2002

**Board of Pilot Commissioners for the Bays
of San Francisco, San Pablo and Suisun**

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Subject: INVESTIGATION INTO THE INTERACTION BETWEEN M/V GINGA KITE AND THE M/V ALLEGIANCE MOORED AT AVON TERMINAL OFF EAST BULL'S HEAD CHANNEL, AT ABOUT 0850 ON 06 OCTOBER 2002.

PILOT: CAPT J. COTA.

- Encl:**
- (1) Preliminary Incident Report
 - (2) USCG Documents - not used
 - (3) Pilot's Report
 - (4) *M/V Allegiance* documents
 - P. Correspondence with vessel's agent
 - (5) Engineer's report - not used
 - (6) Tide Information
 - (7) Overview of area
 - (8) Investigator's Report
 - (9) Photos
 - (10) Lloyds/Jane's information
 - (11) Tug information - not used
 - (12) Pilot Incident Summary
 - (13) Investigation Checklist

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. On the morning of 08 October 2002, the Board of Pilot Commissioners received word of an incident involving vessel interaction between the tanker M/V GINGA KITE and the tanker M/V ALLEGIANCE moored at Avon Terminal. The pilot was Capt John Cota. The incident was reported by e-mail by Capt M. Bayer, Manager Marine Assurance for Tesoro Maritime Company and Pilot Commissioner. Port Agent, Capt McIsaac was advised and followed up with Encl. (1). The incident had happened two days before the report and both vessels had departed the area. There was no opportunity to send an investigator but Ex. Dir. Moloney was able to obtain some information from the vessel's agent and the SFBP database.

2. The Incident Review Committee (IRC) consists of Commissioner Gunnar Lundeborg and Executive Director Patrick Moloney. The IRC met with Capt Cota on the afternoon of January 22 to discuss the incident and develop recommendations.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. M/V GINGA KITE is a diesel chemical tanker registered in Panama. The vessel is single screw; right turning, fixed pitch propeller. There is an 800 hp bow thruster. The vessel was built in 2001 by Shin Kurushima Dockyard Co., Ltd., Akitsu, Japan. Officers and crew were mixed Korean and Chinese. The vessel was lightly loaded.
Length: 485' Beam: 75.5'
Draft: 18.8' fwd, 24.9' aft
tonnage: 12,044 grt 5.913 net
Engine: Mitsubishi, 6 cyl, 8,640 bhp
half ahead 8 kts
full ahead 11 kts
Sea speed 15.3 kts
Encl: (3, 8, 10)
2. The vessel is owned by Andromeda Line Shipping, S.A., Panama
The vessel is operated by Unix Line Pte., Ltd., Panama.
The vessel's agent is Inchcape Shipping Services, San Francisco.
Encl: (1)
3. The M/V GINGA KITE was enroute to the Dow Chemical Terminal, Pittsburgh.
Encl: (3, 8)
4. The pilot of the M/V GINGA KITE was Capt. John Cota, SFBP.
Encl: (1, 3)
5. The master of the M/V GINGA KITE was Capt Seon-Gug Choi.
Encl: (8)
6. The M/V ALLEGIANCE is a US flag diesel tanker built in 1980.
Length: 612' Beam: 90'
Draft: unknown at the time of incident
tonnage: 20,139 grt 11,218 net
7. At 0650 in the vicinity of Avon Terminal, the environmental conditions were:
Wind: unk., not a factor
Visibility: unk., not a factor
Tide Height: 0.3 ft, rising
Current: ebb, 0.8 kts
Encl: (6)

8. On Oct 06, 2002, Capt John Cota was piloting the chemical tanker GINGA KITE to the Dow Chemical Terminal in Pittsburg. As the vessel approached the Union Pacific Bridge he had the speed at half ahead. For the transit of the bridge speed was increased to full ahead. Once clear of the bridge he had the speed dropped to half ahead since there were vessels at the Martinez and Avon terminals and the vessel would be meeting the dredge *Yaquina* working in the channel between the Avon Terminal and Buoy 10.

Encl: (3)

9. One mile beyond the bridge, the vessel passed the tanker NEDIMAR moored to the Martinez Terminal with no observed effects. At that time Capt Cota noted the vessel's speed over ground to be 6.7 kts by GPS.

Encl: (3, 7)

10. A half mile, and less than 5 minutes later the vessel passed the tanker ALLEGIANCE moored to the Avon Terminal. Vessel interaction caused the ALLEGIANCE to move off the dock about four feet. There was no damage to vessel or cargo transfer gear. It was not stated in the report of the incident but it is assumed that cargo transfer was delayed while the vessel was beyond State mandated maximum distance off the berth (2 feet).

Encl: (3, 4, 7)

11. The vessel continued on to Pittsburg and moored at 1015 and discharged a light cargo of caustic soda and departed at 2250 that evening. The departure drafts were 16.7' fwd and 21.0' aft (a difference of 2.1' fwd and 3.9' aft).

Encl: (3, 8)

12. The mooring arrangement of the ALLEGIANCE met or exceeded the State Lands Commission study on high velocity current moorings. The study did not take vessel interaction into account in establishing the agreed to standards.

Encl: (4)

PROBABLE CAUSE

On Oct 6, 2002, Capt John Cota piloted the chemical tanker M/V GINGA KITE to the Dow Chemical Terminal in Pittsburg. As the vessel approached the U.P. RR Bridge at Benicia it was at half ahead speed, about 8 kts. For the transit of the bridge, speed was increased to full ahead (11 kts) to improve maneuverability, but then reduced before the vessel had a chance to bring the speed up substantially. Once clear of the bridge the speed was reduced back to half ahead since there were vessels moored at the Martinez and Avon terminals immediately ahead and the vessel would be meeting a dredge between the Avon Terminal and a buoy a mile farther on.

One mile beyond the bridge the vessel passed a tanker moored to the Martinez Terminal with no observed effect. A half a mile beyond that the vessel passed the tanker ALLEGIANCE moored at the Avon Terminal and interaction effect caused the moored tanker to be pulled four feet off the berth. State Lands Commission requirements call for halting cargo operations if a vessel moves off the berth by two feet.

The GINGA KITE subsequently proceeded to Pittsburg, discharged cargo and sailed that evening uneventfully.

OPINIONS

1. By the time the Board was notified of the incident, both ships had departed the area. No investigator was able to be assigned. Board Executive Director was able to obtain some information from the GINGA KITE's agent and ALLEGIANCE's charterer.
2. ALLEGIANCE mooring arrangement met or exceeded State standards for high velocity current areas. Recent reports from the SFBP indicate that subsequent vessel calls have required extra mooring time to put out additional mooring lines.
3. GINGA KITE speed into a 0.8 knot current does not seem excessive. Lack of access to vessel records shift a large part of the investigation to the pilot's report. The report describes a routine transit of a smaller than normal vessel to an upstream dock. The half ahead speed does not seem excessive and the kick up to full ahead for the bridge transit is normal. The reduction to half ahead would be expected and holding speed at full ahead with the terminals just beyond the bridge and the dredge in the channel would not be prudent. There is no bell book record but Capt Cota's recollection makes sense and there were no reports from the other tanker passed or the dredge.
4. The ebb current would have mitigated the interactive thrust of the GINGA KITE. The subsequent lifting of the ALLEGIANCE off the dock indicates that only the lateral vector of the interaction was felt. There was no reported

fore and aft movement. There was no reported damage other than lost cargo time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

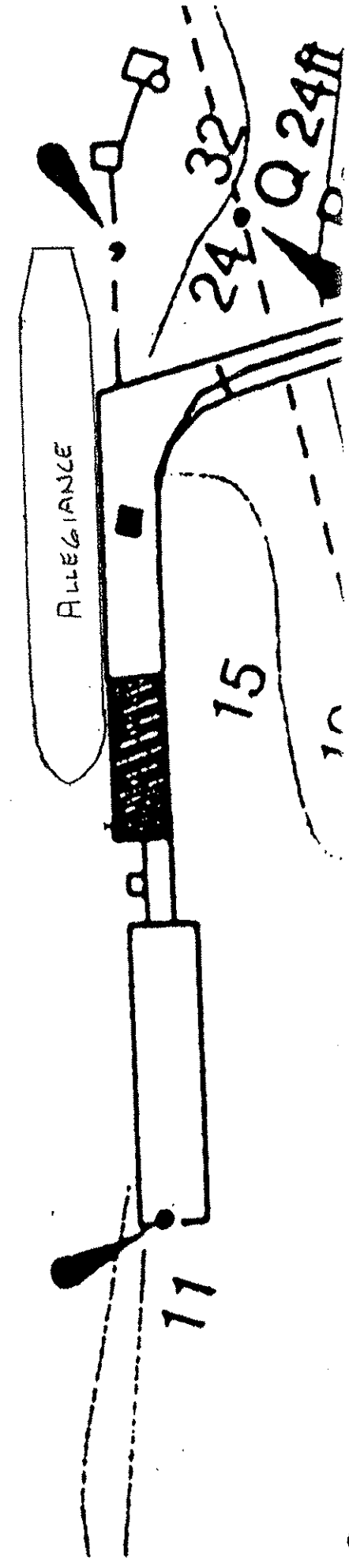
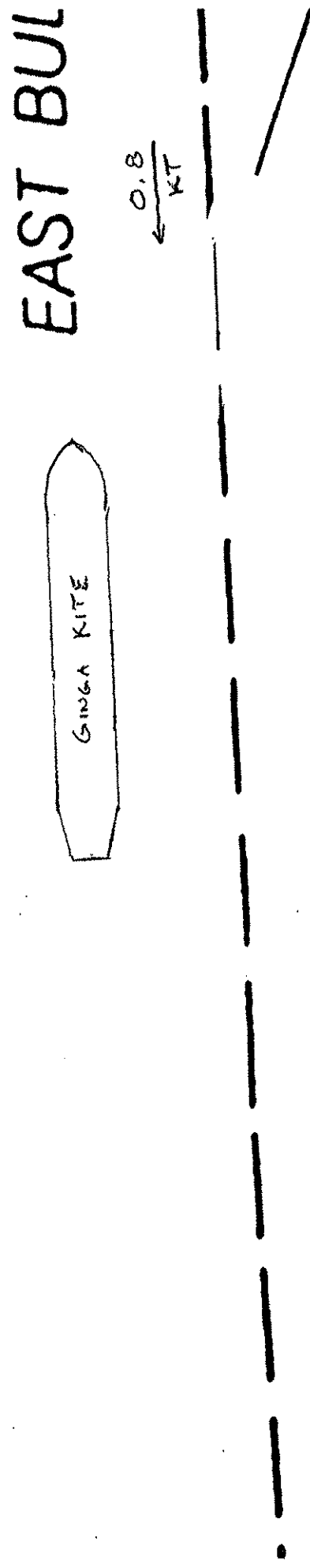
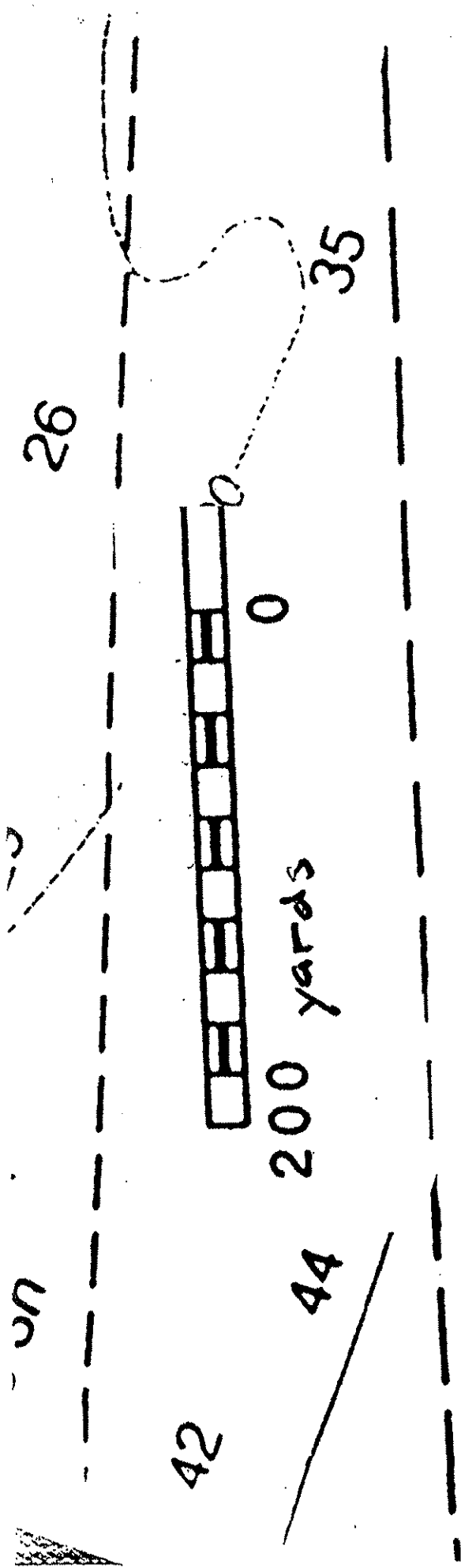
1. Close this case. No attributable pilot error. There was not enough documentation in this case to determine if the pilot was proceeding at excessive speed or passed too close to the effected vessel.
2. The fact that a relatively small vessel caused a much larger vessel to move a modest distance off berth tends to indicate that the moored vessel may have had breast lines that were not tight enough, or were too elastic. It may also indicate unrealistic standards in holding vessels on berth when other vessels are passing.
3. Regardless of causes in this incident, pilots should pay close attention to potential vessel interaction situations and proceed at minimum speeds consistent with good vessel maneuverability. It is recognized that these two standards of operations may at times be incompatible. Route planning should take this into account and may require adjusting schedules or tugs to accommodate safe passing speeds.


Capt. P. A. Moloney


Commissioner Gunnar Lundeberg

Incident Review Committee

cc: Commissioners (7), Investigators (3), Incident folder, Pilot folder, Pilots (59), Trainees (3)
Port Agent Office, USCG, CCC, OSPR, Training curriculum, Adam, Betz, Bonebakker, Graham,
Johnson, Kelly, Nowell, Rath (86 total)



**Board of Pilot Commissioners
for the Bays of
San Francisco
San Pablo and Suisun**



M/V CHIMBORAZO

Pilot: Capt. J. Cota

15 July 2002

**Board of Pilot Commissioners for the Bays
of San Francisco, San Pablo and Suisun**

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Subject: INVESTIGATION INTO THE ALLISION OF M/V CHIMBORAZO WITH
AMORCO WHARF, AT ABOUT 2130 ON 15 JULY 2002. PILOT: CAPT J. COTA

- Encl: (1) Preliminary Incident Report
(2) USCG Documents - not used
(3) Pilot's Report
(4) *Chimborazo* documents
B. Copy of Bridge Log
C. Copy of Bell Book
E. Copy of Chart
L. Copy of Crew List
(5) Engineer's report - not used
(6) Tide Information
(7) Overview of area
(8) Investigator's Report
(9) Photos/drawing of vessel
(10) Lloyds/Jane's information
(11) Tug information
(12) Pilot Incident Summary
(13) Investigation Checklist

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. On the morning of 16 July 2002, the Board of Pilot Commissioners received word of an incident involving an allision with by the M/V CHIMBORAZO with Amorco Wharf. The pilot was Capt John Cota. The Incident was reported by telephone by Capt Nyborg, the Acting Port Agent and followed up with Encl. (1). The Board Executive Director contacted the Board Investigators and assigned Capt William Smith to the job. He began work that afternoon.

2. The Incident Review Committee (IRC) consists of Commissioner Gunnar Lundeberg and Executive Director Patrick Moloney. The IRC met with Capt Cota on the afternoon of September 18 to discuss the incident and develop recommendations.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. M/V CHIMBORAZO is a diesel tanker registered in Ecuador with Ecuadorian crew & officers. The vessel is single screw; right turning, fixed pitch propeller. There is no bow thruster. The vessel was built in 1999 by Hyundai Heavy Industries in Ulsan, Rep. of Korea,
Length: 861.7' Beam: 105.5'
Draft: 33' 04" fwd, 33' 04" aft
tonnage: 35,770 grt 20,119 net
Engine: Hyundai B&W, 5 cylinder, 12,221 bhp
Sea speed: 14.5 kts
Encl: (3, 4, 10)
2. The vessel is owned and operated by Flota Petrolera Ecuatoriana, Guayaquil, Ecuador.
The vessel's agent is Trans Marine, Stockton.
Encl: (1, 4, 8)
3. The master of the M/V CHIMBORAZO was Capt Jorge Castillo Martinez.
Encl: (4, 8)
4. The pilot of the M/V CHIMBORAZO was Capt. John Cota, SFBP.
Encl: (1, 3, 8)
5. The CHIMBORAZO was enroute from Amorco Wharf to Martinez Terminal.
Encl: (3, 8)
6. Tugs involved were:

Name: **Andrew Foss** Operator:
Owner: Foss Maritime
Length: 106' Beam: 38' Draft: 17.5'
tonnage: 250 grt
Propulsion configuration: twin Voith tractor drive, 4000 bhp
Bollard pull: 100,000# ahead, 81,600# astern

Name: **Delta Deanna** Operator: Capt Martin Miller
Owner: Bay & Delta Maritime
Length: 105' Beam: 34' Draft: 14'
tonnage: 197 grt
Propulsion configuration: twin Z drive, 4400 bhp
Bollard pull: 128,000#
Encl: (3, 4, 8, 11)

7. At 2130 in the vicinity of Amorco Refinery Terminal, the environmental conditions were:

Wind: light airs
Visibility: clear
Tide Height: 4.0 feet, falling
Current: slight ebb
Encl: (3, 6, 8)

8. At 2040 on July 15, Capt John Cota boarded the tanker M/V CHIMBORAZO to pilot the vessel from the Amorco Wharf to Martinez Terminal. At 2112 the tug *Andrew Foss* was made fast forward and at 2115 the *Delta Deanna* was made fast aft. Capt Cota had the vessel single up to springlines forward and aft.

Encl: (3, 4, 8)

9. At 2125 the order was given to bring in the springlines fore and aft. While the crew was bringing the wires in forward, Capt Cota had the forward tug stop, allowing the ebb current to push on the starboard bow. Once the bow started lifting off the dock, Capt Cota stopped the after tug to let the stern start moving off the dock. Since the current was pushing the vessel down the dock, at 2130 Capt Cota ordered the engine dead slow ahead for 40 seconds.

Encl: (3, 4)

10. The springlines were made of wire with a shackle at the end and a 10 foot manila eye to assist in passing the wire. As the after spring wires were being retrieved, one of them jammed the shackle on a metal strip covering a wood to concrete interface on the pier. Capt Cota had the engine stopped and longshoremen cleared the jammed shackle. The other wire had dropped into the water into the water.

Encl: (3, 4, 8, 9)

11. The vessel was about 8-10 feet off the dock with the forward springs aboard. The recently freed spring line was being retrieved and now caught on a heavy pipe cover protecting the pier stringpieces and pulled it up from the corner edge timber. Capt Cota had the tugs push the vessel back to the dock until the wire had been retrieved. He was unable to get it parallel before the vessel's quarter landed in the area the line had jammed. Since there was a wire in the water he was not able to use the vessel's engine. Once the wire was free, the vessel proceeded uneventfully to the Martinez Terminal, with the next engine order at 2132 and 27 seconds.

Encl: (3, 4)

12. The damage to the dock consisted of slightly bent metal strip that the shackle first snagged and the L-shaped pipe guard for the stringpiece corner having been pulled upward about 9 or 10 inches. This was caused by the vessel's

crew heaving on the springline. When the vessel landed back on the dock it jarred some planking on the walkway on the outboard side of the dock loose.

PROBABLE CAUSE

On the evening of 15 July 2002, Capt Cota boarded the tanker M/V CHIMBORAZO to pilot the vessel from Amorco Wharf to Martinez Terminal. He boarded the vessel at 2040. By 2115 the two assist tugs had been made fast; the *Andrew Foss* forward and the *Delta Deanna* aft. The tugs were pushing at low power to pin the vessel on the berth. He had the vessel's crew single up to double springlines fore and aft.

At 2125 He had all lines let go and stopped the forward tug. This allowed the bow to be pushed off the dock by the ebb current. When he could see that the bow was clearing the berth he stopped the after tug to let the stern ease off the berth with the current.

Since the current was starting to push the vessel down the length of the pier, he had the engine placed dead slow ahead briefly to take the sternway off and hold position on the pier.

As the after springlines (wires) were let go, a shackle on the end of one of them caught on a metal protective strip on the pier. Capt Cota had the engine stopped and the crew on the stern stopped heaving on the wire. Longshoremen on the pier were able to clear the shackle and the crew began heaving on the wire again. The other wire had cleared the pier and was in the water being heaved in.

The vessel was about 8-10 feet off the pier and holding position when the recovery of the first springline resumed. It now caught on a pipe cover protecting the timber stringpieces at the pier's edges. Capt Cota had the tugs push the vessel back toward the pier to assist in freeing it. The crew on the stern continued to heave on the wire until it pulled free and in the process displaced the pipe cover up ward about 9-10 inches on the corner of the pier. The vessel's stern landed on the pier and jarred some outboard planking loose.

OPINIONS

1. Capt Cota purposely allowed the current to lift the vessel off the berth and used its engine to hold it in position.
2. The vessel was stationary over ground at the time of the springline snagging the dock's protective strip and pipe guard.
3. It was the strain of the springline being heaved in that caused the displacement of the metal strip and the pipe guard.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Close this case. No pilot error. Capt Cota had the vessel well under control when the springline snagged. It was the force of the crew heaving on the wire that caused the metal damage. The stern of the vessel landed somewhat harder than he wanted due to being unable to use the engine to counter the small momentum that built up as he had it pushed back to try and help clear the wire. That does not rise to the level of an error.



Capt. P. A. Moloney



Commissioner Gunnar Lundeberg

Incident Review Committee

cc: Commissioners (7), Investigators (4), Incident folder, Pilot folder, Pilots (60), Trainees (2) Port Agent Office, USCG, CCC, OSPR, Training curriculum, Adam, Betz, Bonebakker, Graham, Johnson, Kelly, Nowell, Rath (89 total)

**Board of Pilot
Commissioners
for the Bays of
San Francisco
San Pablo and Suisun**



M/V MARE CASPIUM

Pilot: Capt. J. Cota

23 April 1997

**BOARD OF PILOT COMMISSIONERS FOR THE BAYS
OF SAN FRANCISCO, SAN PABLO AND SUISUN**

World Trade Center, Suite 234

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**Subject: INVESTIGATION INTO THE ALLISION OF M/V MARE CASPIUM
WITH THE CONTAINER CRANE X-425 AT BERTH 37, OAKLAND OUTER
HARBOR AT ABOUT 1745 ON APRIL 23, 1997. PILOT: CAPT. JOHN COTA.**

- Encl:** (1) Preliminary Incident Report
(2) Investigator Assignment- Not used.
(3) Pilot's Report - 2 pages
Trainee's Report - 5 pages
(4) *Mare Caspium* documents
A. Master's Report of the incident
C. Copy of Bell Book
E. Copy of Chart
I. Vessel's Particulars
(5) Engineering Reports not used
(6) Tide Information
(7) Overview of area
(8) Investigator's Report
(9) Photos and drawing - not used
(10) Lloyds/Jane's information
(11) Tug information - N/A
(12) Pilot Incident Summary
(13) Incident Investigation Checklist

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. In the evening of 23 April 1997, the Board of Pilot Commissioners received word of an incident involving the *M/V Mare Caspium* alliding with a container gantry crane at Pier 37, Oakland Outer Harbor. The incident occurred at about 1745. The Port Agent, Capt R. Nyborg reported it to the Board Executive Director at 1925. This was followed up later with Encl: (1). The Executive Director telephoned Board investigator Capt. William Smith at about 1950, who was assigned to the investigation. Capt Smith boarded the vessel in Oakland at about 2100 as it was due to sail at 0400 the next morning.

2. The Incident Review Committee (IRC) consists of Commissioner William Figari and Executive Director Patrick Moloney. The IRC met with Capt. Cota on the afternoon of Aug 20 to discuss the incident and develop recommendations.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The MARE CASPIUM is a new container ship, homeported in Bremen, Germany, flagged Antigua & Barbuda. The vessel is diesel powered, single, fixed pitch, right hand screw with a 1360 hp bow thruster. The vessel was built in 1995 at Hyundai Heavy Industries Co., Ltd., Ulsan, South Korea. The Master was Croatian with a mix of Croatian, Phillipine and Mayanmar officers and crew.
Length: 641.6' beam: 105.75' Draft: 22' 11" fwd, 30' 10" aft.
tonnage: 29,383 grt, 16,583 net.
engine: Hyundai MAN-B&W, 8 cyl, 27,500 bhp, 21.9 kts sea speed
dead slow astern is 30 rpm, 6.9 kts

Encl: (3, 4, & 10)

2. Vessel owner: MS Mare Caspium Schiffahrtsgesellschaft
mbH & Co. KG, Bremen, Germany
Bareboat Charterer: Hansa Mare Steamship Ltd.,
St Johns, Antigua, West Indies
Operator: Schussel Reederei KG, Bremen, Germany
Time Charterer: Hanjin Shipping Company Ltd, Seoul, South Korea
Vessel Agent: Hanjin.
Encl: (1, 4 & 10)

3. Vessel master: Capt. Dragoslav Petrovic.
Encl: (4 & 8)

4. Vessel pilot: Capt. John Cota, SFBP.
Encl: (1, 3 & 8)

5. Tugs involved were from American Navigation
Enterprise: twin screw, bollard pull- 90,668 ahead, 60,315 astern (5,000 hp)
Marauder: twin screw, bollard pull- 90,725 ahead, 56,168 astern (5,000 hp)

5. The MARE CASPIUM was enroute from sea to Oakland Outer Harbor (OOH), Berth 37.
Encl: (3, 4 & 8)

6. The environmental conditions in the vicinity of OOH at about 1745 were:
Tide: predicted: 2.3' above MLLW water, falling,
Current: predicted: 0.2 kts, ebb at OOH entrance,
Wind: WNW, 20 kts, gusting to 25-30 kts
Visibility: clear
Encl: (3, 4, 7 & 8)

7. Capt Cota and trainee Larwood boarded the vessel at the offshore pilot station at about 1530 on 23 April 1997. The trainee directed the movement of the vessel from the pilot station to docking under the supervision of Capt Cota and the master. The transit inbound was uneventful and Capt Cota noted that the trainee made a particularly good transit of the Oakland Bar Channel. The vessel proceeded into the Outer Harbor and turned to stbd in the turning basin with the assistance of the tugs

Enterprise and Marauder.

Encl: (3 & 4)

9. Once turned the vessel proceeded back down the Outer Harbor Entrance Channel toward berth 37. As the vessel moved down the channel the *Enterprise* was made up on the stern with two lines through the center chock and *Marauder* made up on the stbd bow with one line to a Panama chock. Capt Cota observed that the approach angle was steeper than he would have done it but the very powerful dead slow astern turns that would develop considerable torque to straighten the vessel. He also considered the tug placement to be optimum. Speed during the transit was carefully controlled.

Encl: (3, 4 & 5)

10. The vessel was turned close to parallel to the berth as it approached by a combination of backing engine to torque the stern and take off headway, backing the forward tug & using bow thruster and pushing the stern in toward the berth with the after tug. The vessel was landed on the berth about 150' to 200' short of final position. As it was being landed, a gust of wind pushed the bow in about 2° off the pier heading causing a light contact between two containers and the caprail of the vessel in the area of bay #5 with the outboard legs of gantry crane X-425. The contact was sufficiently slight that the mate on the bow did not feel it and neither the pilot, trainee nor master was aware of it.

Encl: (3, 4 & 8)

11. The trainee used the tugs, thruster and engine to move the vessel farther up the pier to where it was in proper position at 1750. Finished with engines was given at 1812. As the vessel was being secured the activity on the pier caught the attention of the pilot, trainee & master. The pilot and master went down to the dock and learned of the contact with the crane. A surveyor who was present was asked to inspect the crane and prepare a report

Encl: (3, 4 & 8)

12. The survey revealed primarily cosmetic damage. The vessel showed a gouge in the caprail about 1" long and only required paint touch-up by ship's crew. The gantry crane had slight gouges (3" x 1' x 1") on the interior corners of the outboard legs. The crane remained on the tracks at all times and was tested and found operational for unrestricted use. Capt Cota advised that he had discussed the damage with the surveyor post repair and was in the vicinity of \$2500. Container damage amounted to a slightly indented bottom rail on the top container and a slightly indented top rail on the bottom container. They were not due for discharge and damage was considered minor.

Encl: (4)

PROBABLE CAUSE

Mid afternoon on 23 April 1997 Capt Cota and trainee Larwood boarded the MARE CASPIUM at the offshore pilot station. The transit into the Bay and through the Oakland Bar channel was uneventful, with the trainee conning the vessel. The vessel entered the Oakland Outer Harbor and turned to starboard in the turning basin assisted by the tugs *Enterprise* and *Marauder*.

During the approach to berth 37 the *Enterprise* was made up on the stern with two lines through the center chock and the *Marauder* made up on the starboard bow with one line to a Panama chock. Due to moderately high winds it was planned to land the vessel short of the final position and move it up the pier.

The vessel was turned to parallel the pier and as it was being landed a gust of wind pushed the bow in about 2° off the pier heading. This caused a light contact between two containers and the caprail of the vessel with the outboard legs of a gantry crane. The contact was so slight that none of the officers on the vessel were aware of it.

Using tugs, bow thruster and engine, the vessel was moved into position and moored without further event.

OPINIONS

1. Environmental conditions were not extreme for the job. The wind was of sufficient strength to make the docking challenging.
2. Ample tug power was available and the make ups were appropriate for the job.
3. Trainee Larwood retained the conn during the incident. Capt Cota was monitoring his performance and was satisfied with it. Neither of them felt the contact with the crane and remained unaware of it until advised by shore personnel.
4. Landing the vessel where bow or stern overhangs may reach a crane is not optimum positioning of a vessel. Sometimes it can not be helped, but should be avoided if possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Close this case. Minor pilot error. Positioning of the crane contributed to the incident. Incident report satisfies lessons learned factor.



Capt. P. A. Moloney



Capt. W. V. Figari

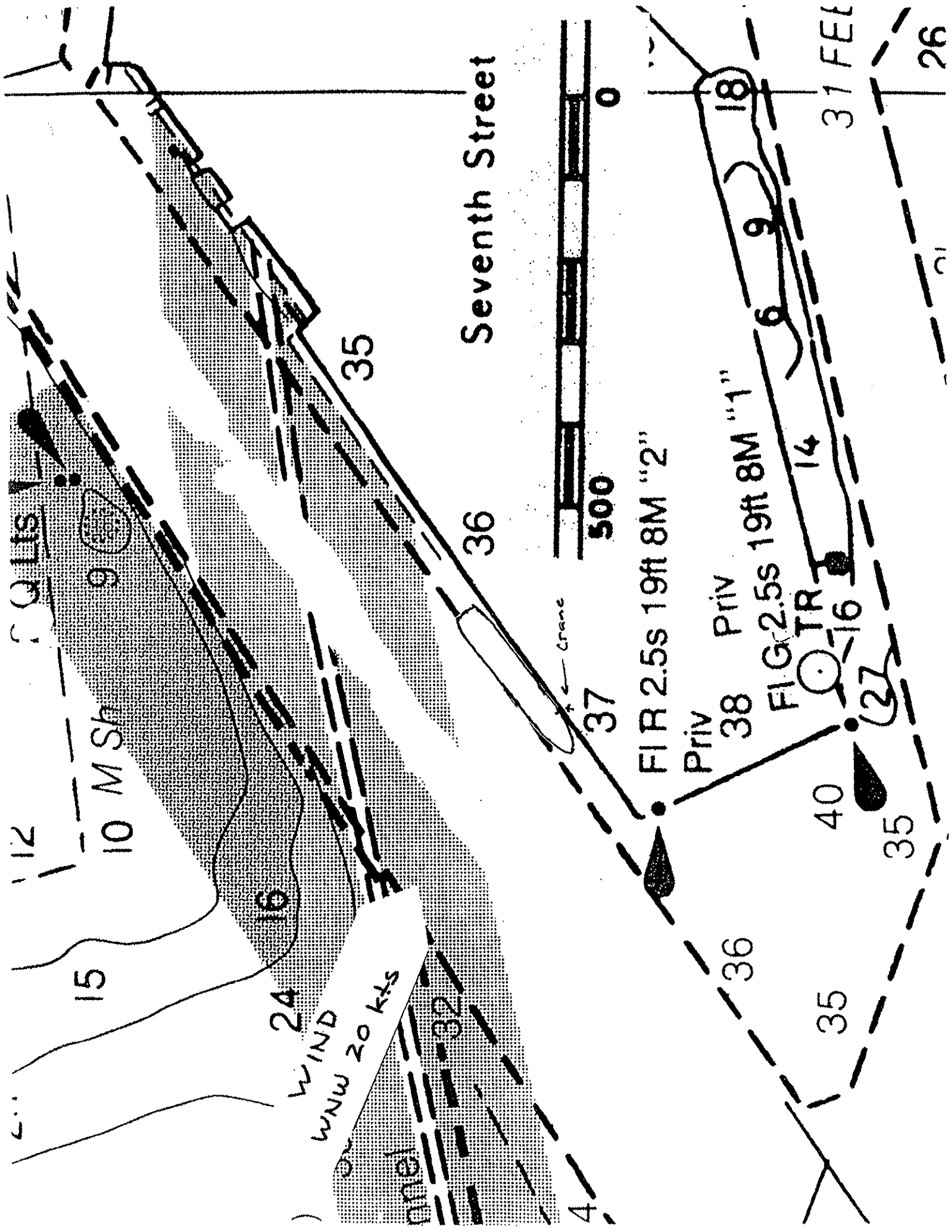
Incident Review Committee

cc: Commissioners (7), Investigators (2), Incident folder, Pilot folder, Pilots (60), Port Agent Office, Trainees (4), USCG, CCC, OSPR, Training curriculum, Adam, Bonebakker, Graham, Nowell, Pillsbury, Rath

28 Aug 1997

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M/V Mare Caspium 04/97



COLTS!

10 M Sh

WIND
WNW 20 kts

Seventh Street

FIR 2.5s 19ft 8M "2"

Priv 38

FIG 2.5s 19ft 8M "1"

TR 16

31 FEET

12

15

16

24

32

35

36

37

36

35

40

35

26

500

0

18

9

6

14

27